



Texas Department of Transportation

news

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TxDOT's five goals: reduce congestion • enhance safety • expand economic opportunity
• improve air quality • preserve the value of transportation assets.

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My Plates Specialty License Plate Marketing Program Ceases Operation *TxDOT working to ensure no disruptions in service for Texas motorists*

AUSTIN - Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) officials have learned that the state's private specialty license plate marketing vendor, My Plates LLC, is ceasing operations in the state of Texas, effective immediately. All license plates sold by My Plates will remain valid, and all orders already placed with My Plates will be fulfilled. My Plates has cited the current economic downturn as the reason for ceasing operations in Texas. My Plates was responsible for all startup costs and no state funds were paid to My Plates as a part of the contract.

The pre-existing specialty license plate program specifically benefiting charity and non-profit organizations is not affected by the My Plates closure.

The closing of My Plates does not affect the validity of plates sold under the program. A My Plates-designed specialty plate will remain valid and can be displayed on the vehicle for the full term purchased. Customers with questions about current vehicle registration and license plates may call (512)465-7611. Customers with questions about an outstanding and unfulfilled order with My Plates may call (877)769-7528.

"It is with great regret that we make this difficult decision to cease My Plates operations in the state of Texas," said My Plates President James Power. "While we are beginning to see increased public interest in our specialty license plates, due to the current economic climate, consumers continue to cut back on discretionary spending. My Plates is simply not established enough to weather this economic downturn."

"My Plates brought an innovative idea to Texas and I'm disappointed that My Plates is unable to finish implementing this venture that would have brought additional revenue to the state of Texas," said TxDOT Deputy Executive Director Steve Simmons. "My Plates challenged the Department to find innovative ways to evaluate plate design. One outcome was that TxDOT engineers developed a first in the nation and award winning process that standardizes how we evaluate the reflectivity and legibility of license plates. This ensures that members of law enforcement can easily and safely read plates."

The enabling legislation for arrangements like the My Plates specialty license plate marketing contract was passed by the 78th and 79th legislatures to generate revenue for the state's general revenue fund and increase consumer interest in specialty plates. All costs have been incurred by My Plates, which has recorded a loss of almost \$6 million to date in establishing the program, including a \$180,000 payment to TxDOT. My Plates will also forfeit an additional \$100,000 performance bond to TxDOT according to the terms of the contract with the state. In addition, My Plates will pay TxDOT \$30,000 to

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cover costs associated with plates already issued and will transfer intellectual property and software programming to TxDOT. TxDOT is currently examining other options for a specialty license plate marketing vendor.

TxDOT's agreement with My Plates, awarded in November 2007, was the first specialty license plate marketing vendor contract in the country. The My Plates specialty license plate marketing program launched August 1, 2008 and, as of November 19, 2008, 1296 specialty plates had been sold across the state as a part of the program and \$168,989.25 have been deposited into the state general revenue fund.

The Texas Department of Transportation

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining nearly 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its 15,000 employees strive to empower local leaders to solve local transportation problems, and to use new financial tools, including tolling and public-private partnerships, to reduce congestion and pave the way for future economic growth while enhancing safety, improving air quality and preserving the value of the state's transportation assets. Find out more at www.txdot.gov.

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